

— VOLUME 3, No. 22 —

Friday, May 30, 1997

THE Talon

OPERATION JOINT GUARD, BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

Serving the soldiers of Task Force Eagle



Pfc. Daniel J. Baxter, 21, an assistant gunner with Mortar Platoon, Task Force 1-77, McGovern Base, gets ready to drop a round into his 107 mm mortar during a training exercise.

Fire mission

By Spc. David Boe
364th MPAD

MCGOVERN BASE - The crowd grew in size and anger. Intermingled with the raised fists were several wooden clubs and AK-47 rifles. Dozens of voices chanted in unison as the people continued their advance toward a cordon of SFOR soldiers. It was only a matter of seconds before violence would erupt, and the soldiers knew it. They needed help there, and soon.

Help is what they got.

Suddenly, a bright flash with the intensity of a white sun, burst directly above the rioters. Chanting and movement ceased as men and women covered their eyes with their hands and gasped in surprise. The brightness seemed to linger in the air as if waiting impatiently for a reaction from the people. Gone was the implacable anger, replaced by a realization that the bright light was from a

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Best headlines of '96

Include Your Children when Baking Cookies

Police Begin Campaign to Run Down Jaywalkers

Safety Experts Say School Bus Passengers Should Be Belted

Survivor of Siamese Twins Joins Parents

Iraqi Head Seeks Arms

Panda Mating Fails; Veterinarian Takes Over

Eye Drops Off Shelf

New Study of Obesity Looks for Larger Test Group

Chef Throws His Heart into Helping Feed Needy

Local High School Dropouts Cut in Half

Hospitals are Sued by 7 Foot Doctors

Stolen Painting Found by Tree

Two Sisters Reunited After 18 Years in Checkout Counter

War Dims Hope for Peace

Teacher Strikes Idle Kids

Red Tape Holds Up New Bridges

Man Struck by Lightning Faces Battery Charges

UP FRONT-- TEAMWORK

The Army functions as a team. When any member of that team is lost because of an accident, the entire team suffers. Accidents have a human cost: The lives of soldiers and their families are changed forever in a moment by a disabling injury or death. Accidents also have a tangible price that must be paid: the reduction of unit readiness. Accidents do not stop when we go to war. The record shows that in combat, the Army suffers more losses to accidents than to enemy action.

The knowledgeable leader adheres to the limitations of equipment, regulations, SOPs and doctrine. He also ensures that his soldiers do the same. He knows his soldiers and looks out for their welfare. This means having a thorough knowledge of a soldier's level of training, capabilities and weakness-

es so he can provide necessary guidance and intercede to prevent accidents due to human error.

A skilled leader ensures that subordinates understand the task, standards, provides supervision and is not satisfied until the task is complete. By developing a sense of responsibility in his soldiers, a unit leader can ensure that they follow the standards even when he is not around.

Soldiers and NCOs, lets pull together and make it happen! See you all Up Front!!

**Command Sgt. Maj. S.L. Kaminski
1st Infantry Division (Forward)**



Heat injuries

Summer in the Balkans is on the way. With summer comes heat cramps, heat exhaustion and heat stroke. It is time to review heat injury prevention guidelines.

The heat index is determined by a combination of the ambient air temperature and the relative humidity. If you remember your high school science classes, you will recall that air holds water vapor. How much it can hold is dependent upon temperature. Relative humidity is the percentage of vapor saturation. Your body cools itself by producing sweat which evaporates off the surface of the skin, thereby dispersing your body heat. On days of low humidity, you may notice that your skin remains dry. You are still sweating, but it is evaporating more efficiently, keeping you cool. The higher the relative humidity, or the closer the saturation point, the longer it takes the sweat to evaporate. This slows down the body's heat dispersal ability. The body then produces more sweat to compensate for the reduced cooling effect. The production of sweat pulls fluid from your body, hence the need to drink plenty of water.

The heat index gives us an idea of the actual temperature effect on our bodies so that we can protect ourselves from becoming a heat casualty. If you wait until you feel thirsty, it may be too late. You must keep yourself saturated so that your body has reserves from which to tap the fluid. If not, the body will rob Peter to pay Paul. You will lose vital amounts of fluid and start spiraling down the heat injury staircase. Cramps, exhaustion and then heat stroke, a *medical emergency*.

Base camp aid stations should be able to provide you with the heat index. The number for Eagle Base is 558-5804 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Above all, watch out for each other and drink heavily. *Water, that is.*

Maj. Gary R. Spegal, 1st Infantry Division Safety Office

THE TALON

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Read and pass along -- a Talon is a terrible thing to waste

Unforgiving

By Staff Sgt. Jerry A. Weber
129th MPAD

CAMP BEDROCK- With mines still carpeting the countryside, the Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) teams located here help prevent the spread of these killers that are blind and unforgiving.

The EOD team was assigned to destroy anti-tank and anti-personnel mines, TNT blocks and a collection of homemade bombs recently confiscated from the army of Bosnia-Herzegovina at the II Corps building near Tuzla.

"We destroyed 210 pounds of munitions that was confiscated by 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry during a weapon site inspection," said 1st Lt. Jorge Serrano, 2nd Ordnance Detachment commander from Grafenwoehr, Germany. "We used three series of multiple explosions to destroy the munitions."

The EOD team used a site in the rock quarry near Camp Bedrock that has been used for previous demolition missions. "This is a great demolition site and is very easy to control access to prevent any injuries or accidents," said Serrano.

The munitions were placed at the bottom of a large gravel mound in three to four foot holes. A counter-charge of C-4 explosive was then placed to destroy the munitions. After the charges were set and all personnel were behind the safe blast area, the EOD members used an electronic detonating device to ignite the charges, said Serrano.

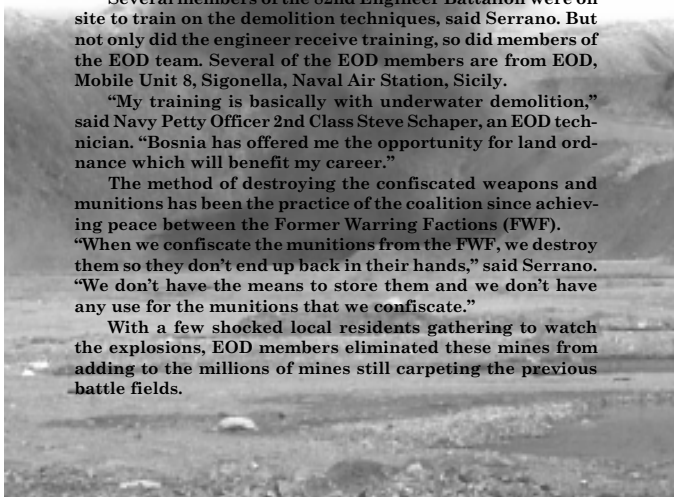
Prior to any blasts, members of Task Force 2-2 quick reaction force prevented access into the area. Members of the 404th Civil Affairs Battalion, Fort Dix, N.J., dealt with complaints from the local population concerning the blasts.

Several members of the 82nd Engineer Battalion were on site to train on the demolition techniques, said Serrano. But not only did the engineer receive training, so did members of the EOD team. Several of the EOD members are from EOD, Mobile Unit 8, Sigonella, Naval Air Station, Sicily.

"My training is basically with underwater demolition," said Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Steve Schaper, an EOD technician. "Bosnia has offered me the opportunity for land ordnance which will benefit my career."

The method of destroying the confiscated weapons and munitions has been the practice of the coalition since achieving peace between the Former Warring Factions (FWF). "When we confiscate the munitions from the FWF, we destroy them so they don't end up back in their hands," said Serrano. "We don't have the means to store them and we don't have any use for the munitions that we confiscate."

With a few shocked local residents gathering to watch the explosions, EOD members eliminated these mines from adding to the millions of mines still carpeting the previous battle fields.



Info briefs

U.S. soldier dies of heart attack

A 29-year-old U.S. Army soldier died in Bosnia-Herzegovina on May 21, of a heart attack he suffered after jogging, according to an Army news release.

Staff Sgt. Aaron James Cabrera of Guam was sitting on a cot in his tent, drinking water after running at about 6:30 p.m., the release said. He suddenly went into cardiac arrest and fell to the floor.

Sgt. Chad D. Love and Staff Sgt. John Loschiavo, certified Combat Lifesavers, began to administer first aid while Sgt. 1st Class Lewis Chaney called an ambulance.

Cabrera was driven to a medical aid station on the base and later was flown by helicopter to a U.S. military hospital in northern Bosnia-Herzegovina, where he was pronounced dead at 8:59 p.m.

Camp Dobol has the best mess

After reviewing all base camp dining facilities in MND North, the Camp Dobol dining facility received the CG's best mess award on Saturday.

New web site available for deployed civilians

A new web site for deployed civilians or civilians preparing to deploy is up and running. Although the site is primarily for civilians, the information can be useful for anyone in their chain of command. The new web site can be found at: <http://www.chrma.hqsareur.army.mil/DeployedCivilians>

The new site will be updated a couple of times each month.

Knocking down doors

By Spc. Janel R. George
129th MPAD

CAMP BEDROCK- Each day, women in the Army open new doors full of opportunities. Pvt. Shannon G. Oxford, a medic with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry opened one of these doors to an Armored Personnel Carrier (APC).

Not only is Oxford the first female soldier to drive the M-577 track APC, she is also one of the first female soldiers attached to this infantry battalion.

Oxford, one of three female soldiers in the entire battalion, has found her working relationships to be nothing less than professional.

"I have no problem working with the male soldiers," said Oxford. "They treat me like any other soldier, but they look out for me like a sister."

"She is a soldier here, just like the rest of us," said Staff Sgt. Charles A. Miller, Oxford's platoon sergeant.

Because females cannot be assigned to infantry units, Oxford is attached to the unit.

Oxford was required to attend extensive briefings and command meetings before assuming her new position with Task Force 2-2.

"I had to attend briefings about sexual harassment and interaction with male soldiers," said Oxford. "I had to go to around 15 briefings a week."

With the everlasting smile on her face and the love of her job, it is easy to see the time required for preparation was worth the wait.

"She gets a kick out of working in the infantry," said Spc. Rob J. Lannom, a personnel administrative specialist with 2nd Bn., 2nd Inf.

Oxford, 20, from Vacaville, Calif., joined the Army just nine months before arriving in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The excitement of the medical field and the joy of working around people was Oxford's motivation for joining the Army.

"The military is the best way to get this type of atmosphere," she said.

"The best feeling is when you help out a patient," said



Photo by Staff Sgt. Tim Erhardt

Pvt. Shannon G. Oxford, HHC, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry operates her M-577 Armored Ambulance at Camp Bedrock.

Oxford. "You help them feel better and they come back later and compliment you on the job that you have done."

In addition to her medical responsibilities, Oxford is the primary operator of a M-577 APC. "They were looking for someone who was motivated and had the skills necessary to drive the vehicle," she said. "I would go to the motor pool every day for weeks after sick call to become familiar with my vehicle."

After many test drives, Oxford was ready for the final test, an eight-hour convoy from Slavonski Brod, Croatia, to here.

"That is one trip that I never want to make again," said Oxford. "I had a stiff neck for a month."

The M-577 APC is used as an ambulance during mass casualty situations.

"We have ambulances that would go out first, but I am always ready," said Oxford.

Daily maintenance is required to keep the M-577 APC in operational condition.

"This is my first responsibility I have had in the military," said Oxford. "I have to do 30 minutes of maintenance every day."

Oxford is the only daughter of Gene and Debi Oxford from Vacaville. She attributes her success and hard charging attitude to her father, a foreman bricklayer.

"I think about him and I want to do more," said Oxford.

With her positive attitude, Oxford will easily achieve all of her goals. "I would like to go to college and become a commissioned officer," said Oxford.

For now, Oxford will continue to perform her duties as a medic and a M-577 APC operator in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

"I enjoy being here because of my surroundings," said Oxford. "The soldiers from 2nd Bn., 2nd Inf. have treated me well."

EAGLE BASE—"Officer, I couldn't have been going that fast." We can try debating just how fast we are going, but we know the person holding the radar gun has the evidence right there in his hand. That is the case back on Interstate 90, United States, and now that's the case here at Eagle Base, Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The Task Force Eagle Military Police acquired a new radar gun earlier this month. It is a Falcon model manufactured by Kustom. According to Staff Sgt. Michael Michaelson, 108th Military Police Company desk ser-

geant, it can be powered by a cigarette lighter in a nontactical vehicle or by a 12-volt alternate power source. The gun uses the Doppler radar system. It digitally displays the speed and also emits an audio signal which becomes a higher pitch the faster a vehicle it's trained on is traveling. Without the radar gun, MPs can still determine a vehicle's speed by timing it as it passes from one point to another. The radar gun vastly surpasses this method in accuracy.

"You really can't argue about how fast you were going," said Capt. Lance Stratton, 1st Infantry Division Deputy Provost Marshal. "We check the radar gun before each use." They use a tuning fork which vibrates at a frequency of 53 miles per hour to calibrate the gun before taking it out to a "radar zone." MPs tap the fork with the gun trained on it and 53 will register on the gun.

Stratton said the gun works by picking up the frequency of a moving object. "It's like listening to a passing train," said Stratton. "The frequency of the sound changes as it moves by you. When you send the radar waves out, they hit the target and are reflected back. The gun actually measures the change in frequency

from when it was sent out to when it returns." Stratton said that MPs at the NORDPOL Brigade are using a laser-type gun to measure speeds. "Wherever we go we need to abide by the regulations," said Stratton.

"This device is extremely accurate," said Pfc. Christopher Nunnery, 108th MP Co. "Most drivers are surprised when we show them their exact speed."

"Our MPs can use this gun while stationary or from a moving object," said Stratton. "It can record the speed of a vehicle coming toward it or going away from it." Drivers going too fast will slow down as soon as they spot the radar zone. However, Stratton said that by then the gun has already displayed the speed. "If the MP can see the vehicle, the gun can check its speed," said Stratton.

The Eagle Base speed limit throughout the base is 15 miles per hour. When passing pedestrians, the limit drops to 10 miles per hour. Outside the base drivers can pick it up to 30 miles an hour. The catch-up speed limit for convoy vehicles is 10 miles per hour over the limit.

The MPs can issue the driver and the senior ranking individual in the vehicle a DD Form 1408, Department of Defense traffic ticket, which is forwarded to their commander, who can use whatever punishment is appropriate. The provost marshal's office will then track the commander's action.

Slow down

By Staff Sgt. Tim Erhardt
129th MPAD

Pfc. Christopher Nunnery, an MP with 108th Military Police Company, locks on a convoy as it rolls into Tuzla Main.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Tim Erhardt

Victory

By Spc. Susanne Aspley
364th MPAD

CAMP UGLJEVIK—On the grounds of the Russian Headquarters near Ugljevik, the Victory Day Celebration hosted by the Russian Airborne Brigade began with regimented pomp and solid Eastern flair. Exaggerated, goose-stepping marches and faces of confident and handsome soldiers filled the parade ground as patriotic band music blared. The demonstration that followed was a show of fast-paced, carefully choreographed military scenarios played out for the generals of several SFOR nations and Bosnian guests.

U.S. Army helicopters flew overhead releasing dozens of Russian parachutists. The colorful chutes blossomed in the sky, and sailed toward the crowd. The infiltrators landed silently and with precision atop the headquarter building. Simultaneously, three soldiers popped over the edge of the roof and rappelled to earth, one running down face first. Meanwhile, a tank fired off several booming rounds that made the ground rumble. A five-ton truck then sped by, screeched to a halt, and deposited a dozen soldiers who secured the perimeter in a tactical display of quick reaction.

The Russian special forces soldiers next executed an impressive martial arts and hand-to-hand combat routine. In unison, they began to whack, punch and drop kick first the air, then each other. Many soldiers were fiercely thrown and flipped, and landed on the unforgiving pavement. After the show, the line outside the Russian first aid station was long.

Finally, a group of the more hard-headed soldiers proceeded to break boards, cement and flaming bricks with their hands and foreheads. In closing, one soldier placed a fishbowl filled with water on his head and allowed his comrade to smash the bowl with his fist.

The striking similarities of the Russian and American armies were exemplified in an army version of an amusing relay race which finished up the day. Teams of soldiers raced each other to the end of the parade ground and back to perform various common soldier tasks. These included disassembling a weapon, donning a protective suit and setting up a field radio. Except for the Russians' different pattern of camouflage, they could have easily been American soldiers racing against time.

Capt. Sergei Ouistchshuck, a translator with the Russian Brigade, sees the two former adversaries more alike than different. "Soldiers are always soldiers, infantry is always infantry," he said. However, when asked the Russian word for 'hooah,' Ouistchshuck was at a loss for an answer. "I'm afraid that is something only American."





Photos by Spc. Susanne Aspley



Clockwise from top: A Russian troop demonstrates his martial arts talent.. Another troop displays his rappelling skills down the side of a building... Two participants demonstrate hand-to-hand combat tactics... A parachutist finds his way to the celebration... An NBC relay.

Show & tell

By Staff Sgt. Tim Erhardt
129th MPAD

SLAVONSKI BROD, Croatia—A pulsating bell breaks the silence. Hundreds of feet pound up and down the stairs as rock music keeps time. They wear Nikes, Adidas, and Reeboks. Young voices chatter excitedly in the halls. They talk about homework, clothes, graduation as they make their way to their next class. A high school in New York? Wisconsin? Oregon? At first glance it certainly could be.

The teacher arrives and the students stand up as a demonstration of respect. They see there's going to be a departure from the normal lesson today. Following the teacher is a tall, smiling man dressed in a camouflaged uniform and highly polished boots, obviously an American soldier.

This was the scene repeated in 10 classes May 12-14, at the Isidora Krsnjavoga High School, Nasice, Croatia, where Capt. Robert J. Lytle shared his knowledge about the American education system with more than 400 Croatian students. He also learned from this new classroom experience.

Lytle is a Civil Affairs officer with the 443rd Civil Affairs Battalion, Warwick, R.I. The 443rd CA Bn. began its deployment at Slavonski Brod, Croatia, Dec. 5. He has been a member of the U.S. Army Reserve for 20 years. Lytle calls East Sandwich, Mass., home.

"...we shared similarities and differences between Croatian and American high schools..."

"I miss being in the classroom and dealing directly with kids," said Lytle. No stranger to the classroom, Lytle, 44, taught 7th grade reading and social studies for five years as well as high school history for five years. He got his bachelor's and master's degrees from State University of New York, Stony Brook, and principal's certification from North Adams University, Mass. Upon redeployment, Lytle plans to finish his in-



Photo by Staff Sgt. Tim Erhardt

Capt. Robert Lytle points out the similarities between the U.S. and Croatian schools to students at Isidora Krsnjavoga High School, Nasice, Croatia.

ternship at Dennis-Yarmouth School District, South Yarmouth, Mass., which will certify him to become a school superintendent.

"My mission contained three facets," said Lytle. "I explained the American college system, we shared similarities and differences between Croatian and American high schools, and, as a Civil Affairs officer, another purpose was to interact with Croatian teachers, administrators and students."

"These students want the same things American kids want."

In each class Lytle asked how many students planned to go to college, and then what career each planned to pursue. Nearly all of the students plan to further their education after graduation. Their career interests covered most professional vocations such as economics, law and teaching. "These students want the same things American kids want," said Lytle. "They realize too that college is expensive, and as I told them, admittance must be planned well in advance."

Lytle also raised issues about choices all teenagers have to make. "We talked about making the right decisions concerning alcohol and drug abuse," said Lytle. "I played a song 'Keep on Rocking in the Free World' by Neil Young that addresses these choices."

Although the kids in their T-shirts and blue jeans could sit in any American classroom without notice, the Croatian education system has some interesting differences. Because the building cannot contain all the students who go there at the same time, the school day is split into two shifts. Students must go to school until age 14. At Nasice students study as many as a dozen

different subjects which are yearlong courses.

According to Josip Patojac, Isidora Krsnjavoga High School principal, students enter into either a three or four-year program. The three-year program offers courses in sales, hotels and restaurants, mechanics, electricity, agriculture, construction, hairdressing and textiles. The four-year curriculum, called "Gimnazija" includes instruction in economics, mechanical technology, electrical technology and agricultural technology. The four-year program is considered the college preparatory curriculum.

"This school is one of the biggest in Croatia," said Patojac, who's been the principal at Isidora Krsnjavoga for 27 years. "It has over 1,400 students in 49 class departments. We have more than 100 teachers, and classes average 30-32 students."

Ana Ostroski is in her second year of high school and has been studying English for six years. "Today Capt. Lytle came to our class. This was very interesting because we've never heard a real American talking English," said Ana. "We've only heard English on TV. He's a witty and funny man. He showed us how people from very distant countries and different cultures can work together if they know the same language."

"I played a song 'Keep on Rocking in the Free World'..."

Many students expressed an interest in going to college in the United States to Lytle. "I'm working on a presentation to better explain to them how to enroll in colleges in America," said Lytle. He is currently working with University of Maryland representatives to provide information to Croatian graduates.



Quick thinking saves life

By Spc. Susanne Aspley
364th MPAD

Pfc. David W. Eldridge, a medic with Company A, Task Force 1-41, applies bandages to a soldier's foot at Camp Demi.

CAMP DEMI- Pfc. David W. Eldridge, a medic with Company A, 1st Battalion, 41st Infantry, says he was only doing his job. But just doing his job without cutting corners may have saved a fellow soldier's life.

That soldier was Pfc. Shane Anderson, Co. A, Task Force 1-41, who went to see Eldridge complaining of aching knees. Eldridge could have given the soldier a pain reliever and sent him on his way, but following proper procedures to a "T", he took his temperature, vital signs and blood pressure. During the blood pressure check, he noticed that it was very abnormal.

"We checked and double-checked because we could not believe the reading. The first time I took the reading I thought I was doing something wrong," Eldridge said. "He came in during normal sick call, and you could see his neck throbbing from the heart beat. He said his pulse went up just a few minutes earlier, so it was the right time and place. I hate to think what would have happened if he was on a convoy or out on a mission."

Eldridge sent Anderson to see the physician assistant at Camp Demi, 2nd Lt. Michelle Curtis-Matthews and physician, Capt. Michael Price, 201st Forward Area Support Team.

"After confirmation of the dangerously-low blood pressure and a thorough examination, he was immediately sent to the Blue Factory in Tuzla," said 2nd Lt. Michael Booth, battalion physician assistant for TF 1-41.

"After more tests, it was determined that Anderson

had acute bacterial endocarditis, a bacterial infection on one of the valves in his heart. Studies showed a two centimeter mass pressing on the aortic valve. The medical personnel concluded that he needed an operation, as his condition was worsening. He was to be sent to Walter Reed Army Hospital in Washington, D.C.," said Booth.

According to Booth, "The whole chain of command worked perfectly to save this guy's life. Although it's Eldridge's job, he could have just given Anderson a pain reliever and told him to go rest. But he took the time to fully examine him at that point. We are really fortunate to have caught it in time."

Anderson's condition is not considered to be caused from the environment in Bosnia-Herzegovina and is currently under medical inquiry.

Booth offered one explanation. "Antibiotics are often given to prevent complications caused by bacteria. For example, he may have had strep throat at one point, naturally got better but did not take antibiotics. This would be one way for the bacteria to stay in the system," he said. "The fatigue and pain in his knee joints were caused by the bacteria."

Medics not only work at base camp aid stations, but are also assigned to infantry line companies. If there is trouble, the medics in the field can bring the sick or hurt soldier back to the rear in their tracked vehicles.

"Both in Bosnia-Herzegovina and at Fort Riley, Kan., the medics take care of their own soldiers," Booth said.

Taking the word on the road

By Spc. Terri K. Cook
1st Infantry Division PAO

CAMP CAISSON — The trip, which consisted of stops at five different camps, seemed to take forever. In actuality it took hours. As the helicopter flew over the hills of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the drone of the engines could be heard miles away. Something soaring above brought smiles to the soldiers' faces at Camp Caisson, and their moods seemed to change.

"We are glad when the chaplains come out," said Sgt. Walter Watson, 18th Meteorological Team, Fort Bragg, N.C. "The soldiers get a chance to talk with them and hear encouraging words. They always let us know we are not alone."

"What helps me to endure the long trips is focusing on the end of my trip — my arrival at camps," said Chaplain (Maj.) James E. May, 3rd Brigade chaplain. "When I see the soldiers' welcoming faces, the long ride is forgotten."

The chaplains made five stops on their spirit-filled mission. Something they try to do at least once a month. Their trip would include stops at Camp Valhalla, Doboj, Camp Caisson and outposts on Hills 722 and 1326.

"The soldiers asked if the chaplains were coming here," said Capt. Roy E. Sevalia, C Battery, 1st Battalion, 6th Field Artillery commander. "I'm glad to see them arrive because it helps the soldiers' morale. We don't have a chapel in which to hold service, so this is an opportunity for the soldiers to worship."

At Caisson, Catholic Mass was held in the weight room and the Protestant service was held outside under the Bosnian cloud-filled sky.

Air Force Chaplain (Lt. Col.) James Kaczmarek, 48th Fighter Wing, RAF, Lakenheath, England, celebrated Mass.

"The Army doesn't have enough Catholic chaplains so I have taken on some of the duties holding Mass," Kaczmarek said. "I feel that it is a privilege for me to come out and serve the soldiers."

During the Protestant service, the soldiers sang and clapped their hands. The chaplain asked if anyone had a song on their heart and a soldier rose and sang a solo.

"All soldiers have a spiritual journey and it's our job to help nourish their spiritual tradition," May said. "They need an avenue to let things out. If they want to sing — I'll sing and clap with them. If they want to talk — I'll listen."

May, speaking from Exodus, asked the soldiers, "Why are you here?" The soldiers had a variety of responses. "You are here because God wants you to be here," May said. "God designed Camp Caisson for you to show you what he can do. While you are here tell God that you want him to be here with you. Sometimes when you are feeling low, know that God is always with you. He'll take this circumstance you are in now, and let you know that he will take you through by showing you what he can do."

"This visit is very important to the soldiers," said Staff Sgt. Andre R. Legrant, 1st Bn., 6th FA, howitzer section chief and lay



Photo by Spc. Terri K. Cook

Chaplain (Lt. Col.) James Kaczmarek gives communion to a soldier from 1st Bn., 6th Field Artillery during mass at Camp Caisson.

leader for the congregation. "Soldiers on deployments look for a source of strength and guidance outside of themselves, and they turn to God."

Legrant, who is a deacon at his church in Germany, holds Bible Study for the soldiers on Sundays.

"We put topics to study on the board on Monday," Legrant said. "The soldiers have all week to prepare. Then on Sunday the soldiers are ready to discuss and learn the word. We have a good time and the soldiers leave with something to get them through the deployment."

Watson says being at a remote camp, sometimes it's easy to grow impatient. "When the way is difficult and dangerous — we tire," he said. "It seems as if there is no rest for our weary souls. Being able to let it out and know that someone else is going through the same thing helps to lift us up."

"The soul and spirit are the most important parts of the human body," May said. "The Army realizes this. They invested time and money into the soldiers' basic needs, such as food, clothing, etc. It is good that they want to emphasize the soul's needs and spirits of the soldiers."

The chaplains departed the camp as they arrived. Flying high in the sky on their way to their next mission. Off to spread the word to other soldiers in the outlying Bosnian countryside. Leaving behind encouraged soldiers — equipped with what they need to face another day.



Photo by Spc. Terri K. Cook

Chaplain (Maj.) James E. May, 3rd Brigade chaplain, sings along with soldiers of Company C, 1st Bn., 6th FA, during monthly Protestant services held at Camp Caisson.

Medical unit puts training to test

By Spc. Janel R. George
129th MPAD

SLAVONSKI BROD, Croatia—Deployment to Bosnia-Herzegovina provides soldiers with a much awaited opportunity to perform the missions they have been trained for. This deployment provides real-world experience as opposed to the training they are more accustomed to.

Members of the 498th Medical Company (Air Ambulance), from Fort Benning, Ga., would much rather perform training exercises than real-world Medical Evacuations (MEDEVAC).

"We don't like to get real evacuations because that means someone somewhere is hurt," said Sgt. Douglas W. Schwab, a medic with 498th Forward Support Medical Team 1 (FSMT).

To stay proficient on their medical evacuation skills, the 498th Med. Co. conducts a broad range of continuous training. This training includes ambulance exchange and MEDEVAC.

"The training is very useful," said Staff Sgt. Raymond J. Wells, 498th Med. Co. "We could not function as well as we do without it."

During this training exercise, FSMT and the 61st Area Support Medical Battalion perform an ambulance exchange. The purpose is to evacuate a critically injured patient to a higher level of care at Blue Factory, near Tuzla.

"We could get a call saying there is a litter patient who needs to be transferred to Blue Factory," said 1st Lt. Erik Halvorsen, officer in charge of the 498th Med. Co.

Once the ambulance arrived, the patient would be trans-



Photo by Spc. Janel R. George

Sgt. Douglas Schwab prepares Sgt. Alvin G. Cooper, 61st ASMB for MEDEVAC to Blue Factory.

ferred on to the helicopter and flown to Blue Factory.

The FSMT also conducted live hoist training. The hoist is used to extract casualties from an area that the helicopter cannot land.

"Our training is very real," said Wells. "The only way it is not realistic, is the sense of urgency."

This training helps to ensure performance is perfect. Time is sometimes sacrificed to guarantee everyone is sure of their job.

"Our goal is to minimize the pick-up time and maximize medical treatment time," said Wells.

MEDEVAC support is also needed if a soldier is critically injured at a base camp. The team flies to the patient's location and performs the evacuation procedures necessary to get the soldier to Blue Factory.

"During training exercises, things roll as if it were a real MEDEVAC," said Schwab. "For all intensive purposes it could be a real mission and we do everything just as quickly and efficiently as we would in a real mission."

To be as efficient as possible, many procedures are performed simultaneously. All members must know exactly what their duties are and how to perform them.

When the call comes in, "The crew chief and pilot will immediately go to the aircraft and initiate all procedures up to engine start," said Sgt. Bryan P. Myers, crew chief from Damascus, Md.

Simultaneously, the medic gathers patient status information and the pilot in command obtains the nine line MEDEVAC request.

"We grab our helmets and fly out like a whirlwind," said Schwab.

The FSMT provides air evacuation for U.S. armed forces, international peacekeeping forces and local military and civilians.

To provide this support, there are always two aircraft on call here. The first response bird launches within 10 minutes of a mission call. The second, up or trail bird, is ready to respond if a second mission arises or will accompany the first aircraft during a night mission. The unit also has a third helicopter to provide mission support such as blood runs, medical supply support and administrative support.

"When a mission is received from the 61st Area Support Medical Battalion or Blue Factory, the 498th Med. Co. can be off the ground in 10 minutes or less," said Schwab. "It is such an adrenaline rush when we first get the call. Everyone is so excited. Not happy that someone is hurt, but excited to perform our mission."



Photo by Spc. Janel R. George

Soldiers from the 498th FSMT evacuate a critically injured patient to Blue Factory.

MISSION

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mortar round, and that the next one might be less bright and much more deadly. After some prodding by the soldiers, the crowd disperses.

The above situation is one of a many Pfc. Daniel J. Baxter, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Task Force 1-77, has trained on since arriving in Bosnia-Herzegovina on peace-enforcing duty with the Mortar Platoon. Thankfully, said Baxter, the situation is still only hypothetical.

"We haven't had to drop a round, but if we did, that would probably be the first round we drop — an illumination round," said the 21-year-old native of Lacey, Wash. "Whenever there is a riot what they might have us do is drop an illumination round right above the riot. It's a scare tactic that says, 'Look, we got artillery laid on you. The next round can be high explosive and you could all be dead.'"

A three-year veteran, Baxter is an assistant gunner with one of the two mortars stationed at McGovern Base. His duties include checking each round loaded to make sure it's good, ensure the round is indexed (so it will slide down the rifled tube properly), level up the cross-leveling bubble (for aiming) and shift the mortar into a new firing position. He said that in addition to his own duties, he must also know all the other section positions, and vice-versa. A lot for a Mortar Platoon member to remember, but Baxter doesn't mind. In fact, he thinks it's fun.

"A lot of people think mortars aren't important until something hits the fan..."

Fun or not, Baxter is aware of the real-world mission he and his platoon members are engaged in. But, again, he doesn't mind. "I like deployments," he said. "I feel like I'm making a difference. Back in the rear you're just training. Here it's the real deal — anything can happen."

Spc. Morgan L. Pettett, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, TF 1-77 agrees. The 21-year-old gunner sees the Bosnian deployment as a chance to use the skills honed at gunnery.

"Before, you trained and trained and trained," said the Haines City, Fla., native. "Now it's time to take that



Photo by Spc. David Boe

Soldiers from Mortar Platoon, HHC, Task Force 1-77, prepare a 107 mm mortar for firing at McGovern Base.

training and everything you've learned and come down here and put it to effect."

Pettett said the peace-enforcing mission is a lot different than the "box" at Grafenwoehr. There, he said, we knew nobody was going to get hurt or fire back. Not so in Bosnia-Herzegovina. "You're out here and you're on edge," said Pettett. "You're like, 'What's going to happen? Are we going to drop this round? Are we going to start something? Are they going to start something? I hope not' And I hope that it never comes down to us having to drop one of those rounds."

However, Pettett said his section is ready for any eventuality because their training hasn't stopped because of deployment. It's a continuous learning process, he said.

"Like last night at about 1:30 a.m. we got a call to do an illumination mission," said Pettett. "We didn't fire, of course, but you get up as fast as you can, get down there and get the guns up and stand by."

Because missions happen fast and without warning, said Pettett, teamwork is essential for the mortar section. "Because if you have a fire mission and your ammo bearer is slow, or doesn't know what he's doing, that's going to take time away from the assistant gunner, because he's going to have to check," said Pettett. "And if the assistant gunner is not fast, that's going to take the ammo bearer to stop and help him. And if I'm no good, then it's going to take longer to get the sight when rounds need to be down range."

Teamwork and efficiency are what

Staff Sgt. Derrick D. Wilson, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, TF 1-77, strives for. Section sergeant for the mortars at McGovern, Wilson, 27, said halfway training can't cut it when in a real-world situation.

"I don't let them do it half way or take short cuts in training," said Wilson, a Gaithersburg, Md., native who has spent over four years in the Army and four years in the Marines, all with mortars. "Because if they do it that way then, they'll do it when the real thing comes, so no matter what's going on, if they're doing it, they're supposed to do it right, and that's what I try to instill in them."

Wilson has under him a section of 107-millimeter mortars, or, as they are more commonly referred to, "Four-Deuces" (4.2 inch tube diameter). The mortars can be either fired on the ground, or from the back of an M113 carrier. Though they weigh over 600 pounds, the mortars are minuscule compared to the mammoth self-propelled howitzers that share McGovern Base with them. The small size of the guns, said Wilson, sometime makes people think the mortars are ineffectual. But, he said, there's more to it than just size.

"A lot of people think mortars aren't important until something hits the fan," said Wilson. "Then they decide they do need mortars because we're quick and accurate."

"I think we're pretty accurate and pretty quick," said Baxter. "I think that anytime we're needed we would be there. That is what our job is."